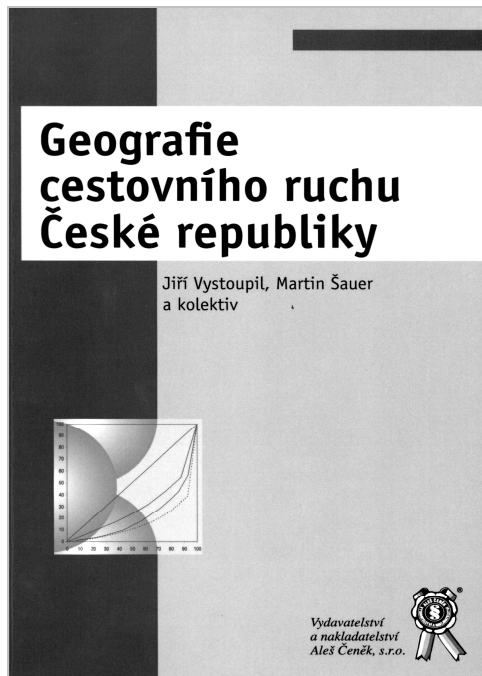


# REVIEW

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## TOURISM GEOGRAPHY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC [GEOGRAFIE CESTOVNIHO RUCHU ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY]

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PLZEŇ 2011, pp. 315

The book, presented as a single volume, is the first overall work on Czech tourism geography published by geographers from the Czech Republic. The six authors are a team of academics from the Faculty of Regional Economics, Masaryk University in Brno, led by Jiří Vystoupil and Martin Šauer.

*Tourism geography in the Czech Republic* contains 315 pages and is divided into eight chapters. A further chapter, nine, is a glossary of terms used. The publication ends with a short (two-page) summary in English, an ample bibliography, information about the authors, as well as lists of tables (47), figures and graphs (27), maps in black and white (12) and in colour (20).

The book opens with a short preface where the authors accentuate the pioneering character of the publication and present its layout.

In Chapter 1 (pp. 9-21), entitled 'The geographical study of tourism and recreation in the Czech Republic', the authors present research development and discussion on the purpose and range of tourism studies in the Czech Republic. The work which is considered to be that which started the discussion was written by Häufner in 1955. Later publications include those by Šprincova, Vystoupil, Gardavski, Bicik, Havrland, Mariot and some other, younger geographers. The main subjects in the field of tourism and recrea-

tion include tourism potential and individual sites, issues concerning the short-term recreation of city inhabitants, second homes, urban and rural tourism, etc. This chapter presents geographers' achievements as regards cartographic work, methods of measuring tourism, and environmental protection in tourism, but also notes prepared for students and textbooks, as well as applied research.

A separate sub-chapter is devoted to a short presentation of the main tourism geography research centres in the Czech Republic, of which four are called 'geographical schools of thought': Prague, Brno, Olomouc and Ostrava. Other centres where tourism studies are conducted include the universities in Plzeň, Liberec, Usti nad Labem, České Budějovice, Pardubice and Hradec Králové.

The whole chapter is a well prepared compendium of knowledge on the research and the centres dealing with tourism geography in the Czech Republic.

Chapter 2 ('The history of the development of tourism in the Czech Republic', pp 22-34), presents stages in the influence of various organizations on the development of tourism in the Czech Republic.

Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> c., the authors divide the history of tourism into four periods: before 1918, 1918-48, 1948-89 and after 1990; presenting the most

important events in the history of Czech tourism in each period, describing them, and illustrating with tables.

It is worth noticing that the authors consider the founding of the Czech Tourist Club in 1888 and *Časopisu turistů* in 1889 (one of the oldest tourism periodicals in Europe) to be the beginning of organized tourism in the country.

In the next chapter (pp. 34-77), the authors present the natural and cultural-historical potential of tourism in the Czech Republic and discuss its distribution. With regard to natural potential, the authors analyse the distribution of all natural assets (Table 3.1), presenting protected natural areas, dividing them into national parks (6) and the protected landscape areas (25) which cover 13.7% of the country's area. They also mention national and local nature reserves and 'monuments of nature'. Each of the national parks and protected landscape areas is briefly discussed and then the authors describe the use of these areas for tourism purposes (tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5), quoting the number of beds available, the density of available beds per km<sup>2</sup>, and per 100 inhabitants, as well as defining the character of the landscape and the season when the area is actively used for tourism.

While discussing the tourism potential of the cultural-historical assets, the authors list the cultural-historical monuments, architectural monuments (historical town centres, buildings, urban and rural architecture, historical technological and military sites, historical churches), both material and non-material values (language, traditions, etc.), and cultural institutions (museums, theatres, etc).

A round-up to this part of the chapter is the presenting of UNESCO protected cultural-historical monuments (12 sites). The chapter ends with two maps showing the distribution of the sites which comprise the tourism potential of the country.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the presentation of infrastructure, illustrated with numerous tables, maps and graphs. Its analysis starts with a description of changes over time and space of tourism accommodation. In 2010, there were over 449,000 beds available in the Czech Republic, 32,500 of which were in Prague, 26,500 in the Trutnov Oblast and 14,800 in Karlovy Vary. In the last 14 years, accommodation resources in the Czech Republic have increased by over 100,000 (over 30%) available beds.

When discussing the sport and recreational infrastructure, the authors stress the importance of new forms of transport (by air, motorways, etc.), which has made the Czech Republic available to foreign tourists.

The authors pay a lot of attention to winter sports facilities (ski lifts, ski runs and cross-country skiing trails), as well as to the infrastructure used in hiking (marked trails, thematic routes and educational trails),

cycling tourism (the development of marked cycle routes) and other forms of sport and recreation. The chapter is illustrated with tables, maps and graphs.

Chapter 5 (pp. 104-158) is entitled 'The main forms of tourism'. The authors discuss nine that have developed in the Czech Republic which they consider to be the most important: urban tourism (nearly 12 million visitors and over 36.5 million bed-nights), rural tourism (a traditional form of city inhabitants since the 19<sup>th</sup> c.), congress and trade fair tourism, and spa tourism (in 2008, there were 86 spas in the Czech Republic, offering 46,000 beds). Spas are categorized: international category I includes Karlovy Vary; international category II includes a further six spas; the national category - eight; while those remaining belong to regional and local categories. Other forms of tourism discussed are summer (e.g. beside water) recreation, winter, wine-tasting, and golf tourism (as a specialized form), as well as second home tourism. Statistically, in 2000, there were 433,000 second homes in the Czech Republic; their distribution is presented in tables and figures. It is interesting that a significant 'deconcentration' occurs over a period of 20 years (1971-91), demonstrated by coefficients of 92.6 and 79.4, respectively. The chapter ends with two short sub-chapters, devoted to the typology of functions at tourism destinations and the functional and spatial transformation of tourism in the Czech Republic.

Chapter 6 (pp. 159-180) is devoted to tourists and other visitors to the Czech Republic. The analysis was conducted in a traditional way and includes number (6.6 million foreign and 6.1 million domestic tourists in 2000), seasonality (the summer season predominates - 43%), as well as the spatial range of places of origin (84.7% from Europe, including 22.2% from Germany) and their distribution within the area of the Czech Republic (Prague highest, with 6.9%). The chapter is very well documented with statistical tables and maps. The thematic maps are a particularly interesting feature (figs 6, 11, 12, 13 and 14), showing the arrivals of foreign tourists from Europe and Czechs' journeys abroad.

An interesting section is Chapter 7 (pp. 181-193), entitled 'The tourism regionalization of the Czech Republic'. The authors present their principles of regionalization, as well as discussing the results. Figure 7.1 is worth particular attention because it shows the tourism regionalization of the Czech Republic 'as the Germans see it', as well as the regionalization historically in 1981.

The last, and at the same time, the longest chapter of the book (pp. 194-262) is entitled 'Tourism profiles of the Czech Republic'. The authors discuss here 14 areas following an identical pattern. It is a description of these areas as they are today including detailed statistical and other information. It covers Prague and

the regions (*kraj*): Středočeský, Jihočeský, Plzeňský, Karlovarský, Ústecký, Liberacký, Královéhradecký, Pardubický, Vysočina, Jihomoravský, Olomoucký, Zlínský, Severomoravský.

When discussing 'tourism profiles' there is a certain inconsistency as they do not correspond to the territorial division presented on the map of 'tourism regions' (p. 309).

As said at the beginning, the book contains a long list of references (over 250), mainly Czech and Slovakian. It appears that the authors have listed a great majority of the tourism-related works which have been published there which has a great documentary value.

In conclusion to this review, I would like to stress a few general points. As promised, the book is a geographical 'monograph' on tourism in the right sense of this word, i.e. a research study based on statistical and cartographic analysis. The layout is typical of this type of work, although the authors have added a number of new features, e.g. presenting the main forms of tourism or including valuable information about 'schools of thought' and other university centres in the Czech Republic with tourism research. A very good idea was to include a glossary at the end which helps in studying the contents.

The authors should be envied for their wide access to statistical data concerning tourism issues, e.g. second homes or tourism figures (especially across time), which in Poland would be virtually impossible.

It is regrettable that the authors did not consider achievements from other disciplines dealing with tourism (economists, sociologists, psychologists, etc.). Even though geographers have the greatest achievements in tourism studies, they are not the only ones interested in the subject. I also believe that the English summary of the work is too short and says little about the contents.

In general, I would like to express my appreciation of the book and encourage it to be read. After a long period of stagnation, tourism geography in the Czech Republic is clearly reviving, shown not only here but in the publication of the *Atlas of Tourism in the Czech Republic* in 2006, and in the first issue of a new journal, entitled *Czech Journal of Tourism* (1/2012).

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